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STATE of RHODE ISLAND and PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICE of the AUDITOR GENERAL

- ♦ INTEGRITY
- ♦ RELIABILITY
- ♦ INDEPENDENCE
- ♦ ACCOUNTABILITY

To: Superintendents and Business Managers

From: Ernest A. Almonte
Auditor General

Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: September 8, 2006

Re: Survey – Future Information Needs

Rhode Island currently has 39 school districts and 11 charter schools, with a total student enrollment of 153,560. The total educational expenditure of \$1.9 billion is supported by three major revenue sources: Local Revenue 55.58%, State Revenue 37.33%, and Federal Revenue 7.09%. As budgets become leaner, stakeholders at all levels want to know how the resources are being invested.

R.I. General Law §16-2-9.4, which took effect July 1, 2004, charged the Office of the Auditor General and the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE), with promulgating a uniform system of accounting, including a standardized chart of accounts. This uniform chart of accounts will standardize the way districts account for resources budgeted and expended and provide greater accountability to assist decision-makers at all levels. RIDE continues to work on changes to existing systems for data collection in order to provide policy-makers at all levels with more detailed information on the allocation of resources and the outcomes of these investments. Beginning with the reporting of data for FY2006, staffing FTEs, and employee benefit breakdowns have been integrated into the process. This year we will also have a special focus on improving the quality of data reported by the districts.

As we continue to explore the development of a Uniform Chart of Accounts, it is important that we determine our data requirements and needs during the development process. Knowing what information you would like to see to assist you in making policy and funding decisions will help us to structure the chart of accounts. We have attached a brief survey that we would like you to complete to help us understand your information needs. Please return your survey by September 15, 2006, to:

Carolyn Dias, Director of Finance
R.I. Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
Carolyn.Dias@ride.ri.gov

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions concerning this, please contact Carolyn Dias at 222-4645.

**OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL
R.I. DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

UNIFORM CHART OF ACCOUNTS SURVEY

Name of District _____

Title _____

State or local agency _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

1. As we develop a Uniform Chart of Accounts, what information do you want, or need to see incorporated into this new accounting structure, that will help you in your policy/funding decisions?

2. What is your expectation of a Uniform Chart of Accounts?
(e.g. timeliness of output, consistency, comparability, compliance with GAAP, linkage of performance measures and costs, compatibility/linkage from chart of accounts to In\$ite, other – please list).

3. What are the top five types of information that you would like a Uniform Chart of Accounts to track or report?

4. Addressing these top five issues, what level of detail would you like to see for these items?

5. What other types of information would you like to see tracked or reported out?

